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ABSTRACT

Drawing from papers presented at the five "Stabilizing Indigenous Languages" symposia held since 1994, this paper recommends strategies for language revitalization at various stages of language loss. Based on a study of minority languages worldwide, Joshua Fishman postulated a continuum of eight stages of language loss, ranging from the edge of extinction, with only a few elderly speakers (stage 8) to use in higher levels of government and higher education (stage 1). Moving a severely endangered language from stage 8 to stage 5 is a prerequisite for keeping it alive and can be accomplished through the efforts of parents, families, and communities. Stages 4 through 1 involve giving the minority language a status that encourages its usage in schools, workplaces, and government. However, the key to minority language preservation lies in the intergenerational transmission of the language in the home. Other issues in language preservation include the role of writing and literacy in the indigenous language hierarchy of needs, the need for students to expand their language skills from primary discourse to secondary discourse, the role of technology in revitalizing indigenous languages, and what kind of teacher training is needed to make schools successful partners in language revitalization efforts. The conclusion discusses the value of indigenous languages as conduits of culture and the need for language activists to concentrate on the methods, materials, and motivation they will use to achieve their goals. Contains 21 references. (SV)

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1

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# *Introduction*
# Some Basics of Indigenous Language Revitalization

Jon Reyhner

*Drawing from papers presented at the five Stabilizing Indigenous Languages symposiums held since 1994, activities are recommended for language revitalization at each of Joshua Fishman's eight stages of language loss. The role of writing in indigenous language revitalization is discussed, and two types of language use, primary and secondary discourse, are described. The conclusion stresses the importance of motivating language learners and using teaching methods and materials that have proven effective in indigenous communities.*

Symposiums on teaching indigenous languages have been held annually since 1994 under the cosponsorship of Northern Arizona University's Bilingual Multicultural Education Program in its Center for Excellence in Education. The symposiums have featured a wide range of presentations, ranging from marketing the value of native languages, to implementing immersion teaching programs, to using Total Physical Response teaching techniques, to developing indigenous language textbooks useful for children, and even to teaching languages over the telephone.

In the United States there is an "English-Only" political movement that questions the value of teaching languages other than English, including indigenous languages. Throughout the symposiums there has been a theme of how language and culture are intimately entwined and cannot be separated. The importance of cultural retention, and thus indigenous language retention, was brought home to me at the third symposium in Anchorage, Alaska, when I picked up a card describing Iñupiaq Eskimo values. One side of the card read:

> Every Iñupiaq is responsible to all other Iñupiat for the survival of our cultural spirit, and the values and traditions through which it survives. Through our extended family, we retain, teach, and live our Iñupiaq way.

The other side read, "With guidance and support from Elders, we must teach our children Iñupiaq values" and then the card listed the values of "knowledge of language, sharing, respect for others, cooperation, respect for elders, love for children, hard work, knowledge of family tree, avoidance of conflict, respect for nature, spirituality, humor, family roles, hunter success, domestic skills, humility, [and] responsibility to tribe." The card concluded with "OUR UNDERSTANDING OF OUR UNIVERSE AND OUR PLACE IN IT IS A BELIEF IN GOD AND A RESPECT FOR ALL HIS CREATIONS." I have kept this card in my wallet as a reminder that indigenous language revitalization is part of a larger

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attempt by indigenous peoples to retain their cultural strengths in the face of the demoralizing assaults of an all-pervasive modern individualistic, materialistic, and hedonistic technological culture. The card reminds me of why it is so important to do everything we can to help the efforts of any person or group that wants to work to preserve their language. It is the earnest hope of the editors of this volume that the papers gathered here from the Fifth Annual Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Symposium held in Louisville, Kentucky, in May 1998 will, along with the two previous symposium publications: *Stabilizing Indigenous Languages* (Cantoni, 1996) and *Teaching Indigenous Languages* (Reyhner, 1997), help indigenous language teachers and activists in their efforts to save their languages and cultures.

The renowned sociolinguist and expert on endangered languages Joshua Fishman emphasized in speeches at the first two Stabilizing Indigenous Languages symposiums that schools can only have a limited role in keeping indigenous languages alive. Other symposium speakers and participants echoed Dr. Fishman's belief that the intergenerational transmission of language in the home from parents to young children is the key to keeping indigenous languages alive; however, schools can play either a positive or negative role in supporting the efforts of indigenous parents and communities.

**Fishman's eight stages of language loss**

Based on his study of minority languages worldwide, Fishman postulated in his landmark 1991 book *Reversing Language Shift* a continuum of eight stages of language loss with stage eight being the closest to total extinction and stage one being the closest to dynamic survival. Fishman's eight stages are summarized below and in Figure 1 along with suggestions on what can be done to promote indigenous language use at each stage based on presentations at the Stabilizing Indigenous Languages symposiums and other sources. It is important to remember that one of Fishman's stages can only roughly approximate the real situation of a particular indigenous language, and it is imperative to understand that different approaches to language revitalization are called for depending upon the current health of a language and unique local conditions.

The most seriously endangered languages are in Fishman's stage eight and have only a few isolated elderly speakers. Partly as a result of years of concerted language suppression by the United States government, many American Indian tribes, such as the Salish and Kootenai in Montana, Pawnee in Oklahoma, Arikara in North Dakota, and almost all of the remaining fifty Indian languages of California, are in Fishman's eighth stage. **Stage eight** languages are on the verge of extinction. Speakers need to be recorded using media that is not subject to degradation over time, such as VHS videotapes are, and through written transcripts using phonetic alphabets that catch the nuances of the language's sound system. However, this archiving of language knowledge can be tantamount to an admission of defeat, with the language becoming a museum piece. While, stage eight elders seldom have the stamina to teach young children, especially in large groups, they can teach young adults singly or in small groups. The Native Californian

**Figure 1. Suggested Interventions Based on Different Stages of Language Endangerment [Adapted from Fishman's (1991, pp. 88-109) Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale for Threatened Languages]**

| Current Status of Language | Suggested Interventions to Strengthen Language |
|---|---|
| Stage 8: Only a few elders speak the language. | Implement Hinton's (1994) "Language Apprentice" Model where fluent elders are teamed one-on-one with young adults who want to learn the language. Dispersed, isolated elders can be connected by phone to teach others the language (Taff, 1997). |
| Stage 7: Only adults beyond child bearing age speak the language. | Establish "Language Nests" after the Maori and Hawaiian, models where fluent older adults provide pre-school child-care where children are immersed in their indigenous language (Anonby, this volume; Fishman, 1991). |
| Stage 6: Some inter-generational use of language. | Develop places in community where language is encouraged, protected, and used exclusively. Encourage more young parents to speak the indigenous language in home with and around their young children. |
| Stage 5: Language is still very much alive and used in comunity. | Offer literacy in minority language. Promote voluntary programs in the schools and other community institutions to improve the prestige and use of the language. Use language in local government functions, especially social services. Give recognition to special local efforts through awards, etc. |
| Stage 4: Language is required in elementary schools. | Improve instructional methods utilizing TPR (Asher, 1996), TPR-Storytelling (Cantoni, this volume) and other immersion teaching techniques. Teach reading and writing and higher level language skills (Heredia & Francis, 1997). Develop two-way bilingual programs where appropriate where non-speaking elementary students learn the indigenous language and speakers learn a national or inter-national language. Need to develop indigenous language text-books to teach literacy and academic subject matter content. |
| Stage 3: Language is used in places of business and by employees in less specialized work areas. | Promote language by making it the language of work used throughout the community (Palmer, 1997). Develop vocabulary so that workers in an office could do their day-to-day work using their indigenous language (Anonby, this volume) |
| Stage 2: Language is used by local govern-and in the mass media in the minority community. | Promote use of written form of language for government and business dealings/records. Promote indigenous language newsletters, newspapers, radio stations, and television stations. |
| Stage 1: Some language use by higher levels of government and in higher education. | Teach tribal college subject matter classes in the language. Develop an indigenous language oral and written literature through dramatic presentations and publications. Give tribal/ national awards for indigenous language publications and other notable efforts to promote indigenous languages. |



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Language Network through the "Language Apprentice" approach is actually passing on endangered California Indian languages to young adults who have both the stamina to teach young children and who can be trained in teaching methods appropriate for schools. Linguist Leanne Hinton has written extensively about the Language Apprentice methods both in columns in *News From Native California* and her book *Flutes of Fire: Essays on California Indian Languages*. As well as describing methods, she discusses in her writings the beauty of indigenous languages. Her recommendations to teachers and learners of Indian languages in Figure 2 are especially useful. Another approach to the lack of speakers at Stage 8 is the Indiana University Model described in this volume that utilizes computer-assisted instruction to make up for the lack of speakers.

Some tribes still have many fluent elders, but most, if not all, the native language speakers are beyond their childbearing years. Fishman describes this situation as his **stage seven**. While often lacking training in teaching methods appropriate for large groups of older children, these older adults can teach their grandchildren their language as demonstrated in the highly successful "language nests" of New Zealand and Hawai'i described by Stan Anonby in this volume. These elders can care for young children in preschool settings and immerse them in their language. Elders can also team up with certified teachers who can help control students in the classroom and suggest second language teaching methods while they learn the language along with the children. Parents are also asked to learn the language along with their children. Anonby also describes week-long retreats where participants voluntarily pledge to use no English.

In Fishman's **stage six** there is still some intergenerational use of languages in the homes. Here parents need to be encouraged to use the language and make places in the community where children can use the language. These places can be community centers, schools, churches, and so forth. It is important to give the language prestige so that the children learning the language will keep speaking it through their teenage years until they become parents and can pass it on to their children. Creating a published written literature of poems, plays, and stories is one way to give a language prestige. Also it is helpful to have government officials, athletes, and other well-known community members use the language.

In **stage five** the language is still very alive and used in minority communities, and even on a voluntary basis in schools. Frank Smith (1988) in his book *Joining the Literacy Club* focuses on the importance of getting children to see that literacy is something for them and needs to be a part of their identity. Similarly, for language revival efforts to be successful, children need to feel that it is "their" indigenous language and that speaking the language makes them a member of an important and worthwhile group. As with any "club," there needs to be interesting and important projects and activities for the children to do.

Historically, school-based second language teaching has not led to widespread "communicative competency" (the ability to carry on a sustained conversation) in the new language for most students. It is extremely important to use language teaching methods in schools that will prepare and encourage students to use the language they are learning outside of school. Reyhner and

**Figure 2. Eight Points of Language Learning (From Leanne Hinton, *Flutes of Fire*. Berkeley CA: Heyday Books, 1994, pp. 243-244, Used by Permission)**

| Teachers | Apprentices |
|---|---|
| **1. Be an active teacher.** Find things to talk about. Create situations or find something in any situation to talk about. Tell stories. Use the language to tell the apprentice to do things. Encourage conversation. | **1. Be an active learner.** Ask about things. Create situations, bring things to ask your teacher to tell you about; find things in the environment to ask about; ask him/her to tell you stories. |
| **2. Don't use English**, not even to translate. | **2. Don't use English**, not even when you can't say it in the language. Find other ways to communicate what you want to say. |
| **3. Use gestures, context, objects, actions** to help the apprentice understand what you are saying. | **3. Use gestures, context, objects, actions** to help in your communication when you don't know the words. |
| **4. Rephrase for successful communication.** Rephrase things the apprentice doesn't understand, using simpler ways to say them. | **4. Practice.** Use new words and new sentences and grammar as much as possible, to yourself, to your teacher, to other people. |
| **5. Rephrase for added learning.** Rephrase things the apprentice says to show him correct forms or extend his knowledge to more complex forms. Encourage communication in the language, even with errors. | **5. Don't be afraid of mistakes.** If you don't know how to say something right, say it wrong. Use whatever words you know; use gestures, etc. for the rest. |
| **6. Be willing to play with language.** Fantasize together; make up plays, poems, and word games together. | **6. Be willing to play with language** like children do. Name things you see, count them, talk about what color they are. Make up stories. |
| **7. Understanding precedes speaking.** Use various ways to increase and test understanding. Give the apprentice commands to follow. Ask him/her questions. It is not necessary to focus on speaking each new word right away; that will come naturally. | **7. Understanding precedes speaking.** You may recognize and understand many things you cannot say. Focus on understanding: that is the most important step toward language learning. After you understand an utterance fully, learning to speak it will not take long. |
| **8. Be patient.** An apprentice won't learn something in one lesson. Repeat words and phrases often, in as many different situations and conversations as possible. | **8. Be patient with yourself.** It takes a long time to learn a language well. You are doing a heroic task; forgive mistakes. |



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Tennant (1996) draw from the work of Krashen, Lozanov, and Berlitz five principles that need addressing, with varying degrees of emphasis, in effective language-teaching programs: 1) Putting primary emphasis on *communication*, not grammar, 2) Using *context* that is real or at least realistic, 3) Processing *content* of high interest to the learner, 4) Adjusting the pace of instruction to the students' progress, including moving from simple to complex (generally speaking), emphasizing speaking over speaking correctly, and putting comprehension before completion, and finally 5) Correcting students through modeling.

According to Fishman, moving a severely endangered language from stage 8 to stage 5 is the minimal prerequisite for keeping it alive, and this effort does not require the dominant English-speaking group's cooperation. Stages four through one involve giving the minority language a legal status, including minority language use in schools, workplaces, and government. This has been accomplished in principle through the rhetoric of the Native American Languages Act of 1990 and policy statements passed by some tribes in the United States. However, making the rhetoric a reality is another issue, and efforts for real change can bring right wing political reactions.

In Fishman's **stage four**, the minority language is required in elementary schools, and it is important to teach "academic" subject matter in it rather than just teaching it as a second language. The success of the Rock Point Community School in the Navajo Nation, which has had bilingual education for almost thirty years, is a good example of what can be done in schools to build on home and community language preservation efforts. At Rock Point two-thirds of the kindergarten time and one-half of the time in grades one through three were Navajo immersion with academic content taught in Navajo. In grades four through twelve, from one-fifth to one-fourth of class time was taught in Navajo (Holm & Holm, 1995; Reyhner, 1990).

In **stage three** the indigenous language is used among employees (but not by supervisors). Historically, it has been very difficult, because of bureaucratic red tape required both by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and tribes, for local people to get small business started on Indian reservations in the United States. Making businesses as easy to open in Indian Nations as outside of Indian country would both keep more income in the Nations and would create new environments for native language use. At the 1997 symposium Scott Palmer spoke about the importance of using indigenous languages in a work environment. He theorized that the language of the work environment would ultimately determine the language of the home as parents sought economic opportunity for their children.

Fishman emphasizes the need to use the indigenous language to give adults useful information on a variety of topics. For example, he discussed a bilingual book, *Social Work and the Welsh Language*, about "using Welsh in job training, job retraining, health counseling, literacy efforts, school transition, helping kids go from elementary to high school, bereavement counseling, building happy peer group ties, and vocational planning" in his 1995 symposium keynote speech. Using material such as this, indigenous language activists can provide valuable needed service to their community as they work to revive their language.

In **stage two** lower government services and mass media use the language. Literacy efforts that would halt the "special diglossia" that Daniel McLaughlin (1992) describes where tribal government officials speak the tribal language but keep all records in English would add prestige to tribal languages. Tribal colleges can do a lot both to promote indigenous language reading and writing skills and can also target their educational programs to the actual local occupational needs of their particular Indian nation. A good example of this job targeting can be found at Salish Kootenai College in Montana. If college educated supervisors use the language, other workers will also be encouraged to use it.

In **stage one**, higher levels of government and education use the language. The tribal college movement begun in 1968 in the United States with the founding of Navajo Community College, now known as Diné College, is one of the most promising events in Indian country. This movement has grown till in 1999 the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) listed 31 college, institute, and university members. Recently, Sinte Gleska University, Oglala Lakota College, Diné College, and Haskell Indian Nations University started four-year teacher-education programs. Except for Haskell, an intertribal college, tribal language and culture requirements are integral to these teacher education programs. Non-tribal colleges and universities near Indian Nations have also been increasing their offerings of tribal languages and sometimes offer bilingual teacher training programs (Reyhner, Lockard, & Rosenthal, in press). For example, Northern Arizona University (NAU) for Fall 1999 offered five sections of First Year Navajo and one section each of Second Year Navajo, Intermediate Conversation, Navajo for Native speakers, and Navajo Culture and Civilization. NAU also offers a Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree in Bilingual Multicultural Education that can lead to a bilingual endorsement on a basic teaching certificate from the Arizona Department of Education.

**Fishman's conclusions**

Fishman notes how the emphasis on individual rights in modern western democracies detracts from the recognition of minority group rights. He writes,

> The denial of cultural rights to minorities is as disruptive of the moral fabric of mainstream society as is the denial of civil rights. Civil rights, however, are focused on the individual, while cultural rights must focus on ethnocultural groups. Such groups have no recognized legal standing in many Western democracies where both establishment capitalist thought and anti-establishment Marxist thought prophesies the eclipse of culturally distinct formations and the arrival of a uniformized, all-inclusive "modern proletarian" culture. (1991, p. 70)

Fishman defends the need to recognize "cultural democracy" as a part of general democracy and to see efforts to preserve and restore minority languages as societal reform efforts that can lead to the appreciation of the beauty and distinctiveness of other cultures as well. He emphasizes that efforts to restore minority



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languages should be voluntary and "facilitating and enabling" rather than "compulsory and punitive" and that bilingualism should be viewed as life enriching and a bridge to other cultures (1991, p. 82). In this Fishman echoes smaller studies such as Colin Baker's (1988) review of compulsory and voluntary efforts to revive Celtic languages in the British Isles.

Important factors Fishman finds in successful efforts to maintain minority languages include the need for sacrifice, self-help, self-regulation, and the establishment of boundaries. He logically locates the key to minority language preservation in the intergenerational transmission of the language in the home by families, not in government policies and laws. He writes, "The road to societal death is paved by language activity that is not focused on intergenerational continuity" (1991, p. 91). He cautions against putting too much effort and reliance on native language media, schools, and governmental efforts. An indigenous language radio station or policy statements such as those found in the Native American Languages Act of 1990 can make for a friendlier environment for minority languages, but they are no substitute for grassroots efforts focused on using indigenous language in homes and at community social occasions.

Outside of homes, minority language use in early childhood centers, such as the Maori and Hawaiian language nests described by Stan Anonby in this volume, and in pre- and post-natal programs for young mothers is important. In the community, minority language use can also be in cooperative markets, employment centers, recreational centers, legal aid services, credit unions, and so forth. Fishman also points out the need for teachers who teach "academic" subject matter in the home language and who are tolerant and accepting of different dialects. Fishman asserts, "it doesn't pay to force a written standard, much less a spoken one, on an adamantly unwilling or seriously ailing speech community" (1991, p. 345). Lastly, social boundaries must be developed that give minority languages an exclusive role in traditional family and community social activities.

The point Fishman comes back to time and again in his writings is the same issue of the social costs of minority "language-in-culture" loss brought up by Lilly Wong Fillmore (1991) in her article "When Learning a Second Language Means Losing the First." These social costs include alcoholism, drug abuse, dysfunctional families, child abuse, and the like, and they are documented extensively in the literature on indigenous peoples. For example, Oglala/Lakota American Indian Movement leader and movie actor Russell Means (1995) in his autobiography *Where White Men Fear to Tread* chronicles indigenous cultural disintegration and the resulting bar hopping, drinking parties, and drug use that have led to car accidents, alcoholism, and premature deaths of many Indians. He also describes attempts to revive traditional cultural values. The disintegration of "American culture," especially among youth, is decried by political conservatives in the ongoing "family values" debates in the United States, but they usually fail to link this crisis with their English-only political agenda and the social costs of forced assimilation.

A discussion follows of where efforts need to go in terms of further developing children's Native language competencies, including reading and writing,

once children begin speaking their Native language so that they can have full access to the traditional knowledge of their Native culture. This discussion is followed by a brief discussion of the role of new computer technology in language revitalization and what kind of teacher training is needed to allow schools to be successful partners in language revitalization efforts.

**The role of writing in the indigenous language hierarchy of needs**

American Indians and other indigenous peoples, based on the history of colonization, are often deeply suspicious of all things associated with European and other colonizers. The fact that Christian missionaries were often the first to develop writing systems for indigenous languages in order to translate their Bible and convert Natives from their traditional religions makes reading and writing indigenous languages especially problematic. In addition, in the hierarchy of needs, reading and writing can wait, because many children cannot even speak their ancestral languages. However, in cases such as at Rock Point Community School, where many students still come to school speaking Navajo, Native language literacy is less controversial, especially when Navajo is used to read and write about local events, issues, and needs. Brian Bielenberg discusses in this volume the concerns some American Indians have about indigenous language literacy. The concern that writing will change the language is real, but as Richard Littlebear and Stephen Greymorning discuss in their papers in this volume, languages should be living, not fixed in time and thus dead. Perhaps, with the knowledge of the possibilities for change that writing can produce, traditionalists can exert some control over those changes to preserve what they hold dear while taking steps to allow there language to be more viable in a modern, technological society. H. Russell Bernard puts the case for literacy forcefully:

> For those linguists who want to help preserve language diversity, there are, in my view, two best things to do. One is to help native people develop more language-nest programs.... The other is to help native people develop publishing houses.
>
> I want to make clear that I am talking about real publishing of books that are sold on an aggressively sought market. And I want to make equally clear that bilingual education and teaching people to write their previously nonliterary languages is not, by itself, a solution. (1997, pp. 143-144)

American Indian communities have a hierarchy of needs based on the current health of the language. Communities with the direst needs are those where only a few speakers are left, and they are all very old. In fact, at the 1998 conference of the American Association for Applied Linguistics in Seattle, Natasha Warner, one of Leanne Hinton's graduate students, described working with a family in California who wanted to learn their ancestral language and there were no speakers left, only the records of missionaries and linguists. Documentation (see Parks, et al., this volume) and conversational proficiency are critical for the

most endangered languages. Once children achieve conversational proficiency at home, in language nests, in schools, or elsewhere, then there is a need to expand that proficiency into more sophisticated realms so that they can discuss abstract higher-level topics. Since schools are about literacy, one could argue that to do anything with indigenous languages in schools presupposes promoting indigenous language literacy—that literacy is part of the evolution of languages that are going to survive in the modern world. Scott Palmer (1997) emphasized at the 1997 symposium the role of the language of the workplace in the survival of indigenous languages, and stopping at conversational proficiency implies that those speaking indigenous languages in the workplace will be relegated to lower paying jobs that do not require literacy. The papers by Ruth Bennett and her associates and Gina Cantoni in this volume discuss how language teachers can continue to develop their students' language skills, including writing skills, once students have achieved a beginning conversational proficiency.

At the conversational level textbooks are not needed, just teacher training and teacher guides, but at the higher levels textbooks need to be developed, first like the ones that Willem de Reuse and Bernadine Adley-SantaMaria described at the 1997 symposium, and then others that teach the history and culture of the group. Such textbooks exist in English for at least some tribes today, but those written in indigenous languages, especially those written for children, are practically nonexistent. A limited example of content area indigenous language teaching material was described by Delores Jacobs in her presentation at the 1997 symposium on the "Science Explorers Translation Project," which dealt with developing curriculum on Hantivirus disease prevention for Navajos.

Depending on how strong an indigenous language is, different intervention strategies are needed to revitalize the language. Ideally, children should pick up conversational proficiency in their ancestral language at home before they ever reach school and if not at home, in language nests. If that goal is reached, then schools can build on this success by teaching students to read and write the language so they then can use it as the language of instruction for mathematics, science, social studies, and all the other subjects taught in schools. Literacy can also expand the environments for indigenous language use beyond schools to letters, e-mail, signs, newspapers, magazines, books, government documents, and all the other venues of literacy. Literacy would avoid the anomaly of Navajos speaking their language in their tribal council and on their radio station but writing their council minutes and radio scripts in English (McLaughlin, 1991).

**Primary and secondary discourse**

Mark Fettes at the 1997 symposium spoke about the three interwoven braids of language renewal, and in the process talked about primary and secondary discourse. For academic success students need to expand their language skills from primary discourse to secondary discourse. Conversational proficiency in an indigenous language is great, but it is useful only in contextualized face-to-face situations [the model for this is Asher's (1996) TPR] and does not lead by

itself to proficiency in decontextualized situations that abound in school work, especially beginning about fourth grade. However, the use of TPR-Storytelling that Gina Cantoni writes about in this volume can move students into the realm of secondary discourse, especially if students begin to write scripts for their storytelling.

Primary discourse is associated with face-to-face conversational interaction among members of a speech community while secondary discourse is more abstract and is needed when dealing with strangers who do not have a set of closely shared experiences and understandings from which to interpret what is being said (see Figure 3 below). Secondary discourse has also been associated with dependent clauses that add additional information to speaking and writing, but which also require more language sophistication to understand and use. It can be argued that it is around fourth grade where language use in classrooms, especially in textbooks and lectures, shifts from the language one finds in everyday conversational speech to a school language that is not generally used in a community for day-to-day activities. Students who do not develop academic language skills cannot handle the type of textbook-oriented instruction that predominates in the higher grades in schools. Armando Heredia and Norbert Francis suggested at the 1997 symposium that one way to help students enlarge their language competencies to include secondary as well as primary discourse is through the use of written versions of traditional stories.

**Figure 3. Categorization of Language Skills Required in Different Settings**

| Family/Neighborhood | School/Larger Society |
|---|---|
| Primary Discourse | Secondary Discourse |
| Mostly Face-to-Face | Often at a Distance |
| Contextualized Language | Decontextualized Language |
| Context Embedded | Context Reduced |
| Conversational Proficiency | Academic Language Proficiency |
| Concrete/Surface Meaning | Abstract/Deeper Meaning |
| 2-Way Dialogue | 1-Way Lecture/Textbook |
| Indian English | Standard English |

**The role of technology in revitalizing indigenous languages**

The final section in this volume is on the uses of technology in indigenous language revitalization efforts. There has been telling criticism of "technofixes" for endangered languages. Hilaire Paul Valiquette writes that,

> Computers are the most questionable of language teaching tools. They are not cost-effective; they bypass intergenerational teaching; they often involve handing over control to technical experts. They are very often connected with bad L[anguage] teaching (word lists, clicking on the face to hear the word 'nose,' etc.). Their use makes a patronizing

> statement: "the superiority of technology of the dominant culture is saving you." (1998, p. 111)

However given that, he goes on to write, "Computers do have a use in long-range language preservation" (1998, p. 111).

The first paper in this section by Mizuki Miyashita and Laura Moll describing a dictionary project is a good example of using technology to inexpensively aid both language documentation and to make that information more accessible to indigenous language learners. The second paper by Amar Almasude focuses on how cassette tape recorders and other new technologies have allowed an oral culture to be maintained and diffused both within Morocco and among emigrants abroad. The last paper by Robert St. Clair and his colleagues gives useful information to anyone interested in publishing indigenous language materials.

**Teaching and supporting indigenous languages**

Anyone studying the issue knows how threatened indigenous languages are everywhere in the world despite the rhetoric of tribal policies and the Native American Languages Act in the United States and similar efforts abroad, such as the 1992 Sámi Language Act in Norway (Corson, 1995). However, this volume emphasizes the positive steps being taken to effectively revitalize indigenous languages so that Native people who wish to keep their languages alive can get some guidance from the efforts currently being made around the world. And I want to emphasize that these efforts supporting indigenous languages indicate that children can learn an international language such as English along with their indigenous language. English does not have to be purchased at the price of losing one's indigenous language.

However, if we are to get beyond teaching students numbers, colors, and names of animals, teacher education will be critical in regard to school programs designed to revitalize indigenous languages. There is a large body of experience with second language teaching that can inform teachers of indigenous languages. In particular, Joyce Silverthorne, a member of the Montana State Board of Education, dealt at the 1997 symposium with the broad overview of education required for a professional indigenous language teacher. An excellent inservice teacher training model for promoting indigenous language preservation and teaching that incorporates modern research on second language acquisition is described in appendix of *Stabilizing Indigenous Languages* (Cantoni, 1996, pp. 234-239). Developed by Richard Littlebear and the staff of the Interface Alaska Bilingual Multifunctional Resource Center, the model stresses the importance of the use of the Total Physical Response (TPR) and "Natural" approaches to language learning for beginning language instruction. The model also discusses the importance of attitudes towards language, building a theoretical base, building a rationale for language preservation, classroom teaching methods, practical applications, and follow-up to training. Immersion teaching methods, such as Greymorning describes in this volume, are most conducive to developing communicative competence, but they require fluent teachers who are

not always available. Teresa McCarty and her colleagues described at the 1997 symposium an intensive summer training program for teachers of indigenous languages, and Cantoni and Reyhner (1998) summarized what educators can do to help with indigenous language revitalization.

Steve Greymorning's 1997 symposium presentation on "Going Beyond Words" and his paper in this volume describe various efforts to teach Arapaho to school children, which had more and more success as the teachers were taught various immersion language teaching methods and spent more classroom time using them to teach Arapaho, but he concludes by advocating the Maori "philosophy of language from the breast," which emphasizes intergenerational language transmission in the home. The Maori have started language classes for mothers with children 16 to 24 months old. Mothers learn Maori while their babies also learn the sounds and cadences of their tribal language. Veronica Carpenter described at the 1997 symposium how young children pick up the sounds and rhythms of the language(s) spoken around them and how older children not so exposed to their tribe's language need specific help to pick up that sound system they did not learn at their mother's breast.

It is well known that infants who are breast fed pick up immunities from childhood diseases from their mother's milk, and I maintain that children who learn their indigenous language and culture at their mother's breast pick up immunities from the diseases of modern life that lead our children to joining youth gangs, abusing drugs and alcohol, and becoming members of the rootless consumer society described by Robert N. St. Clair in his talk on "The Invisible Doors Between Cultures" at the 1997 symposium. The message about the values of indigenous languages and cultures that I found on the Iñupiaq wallet card I received in Anchorage at the Third Annual Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Symposium needs to be a part of any indigenous language revitalization effort. Whichever of Fishman's stages an indigenous language is in, there is a need to convince people, indigenous and non-indigenous, that keeping the language alive is important. This need for "marketing" indigenous languages was described at the 1997 symposium in regard to the Maori of Aeotora/New Zealand by Rangi Nicholson.

**Conclusion**

Indigenous language activists first need to determine the current status of their language and then set realistic goals for their language revitalization efforts. Irregardless of whether these goals include literacy, once goals are established, language activists need to concentrate on the **methods**, **materials**, and **motivation** they will use to achieve their goals, what I term the **three "M's"** of indigenous language education (see Figure 4). It is these **three "M's"** that will either lead indigenous language learners to communicative competence and more sophisticated language usage or to failure.

No one person, community, school, university, tribe, or government program has all the answers to keeping any indigenous language alive. It is only through sharing successes and learning from failures that the extinction of in-



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digenous languages can be prevented. More needs to be done to create a network of information sharing between indigenous communities. The five symposiums and associated publications, including this volume, *Revitalizing Indigenous Languages*, are among the many attempts to get the word out about the importance and value of indigenous languages, the current peril they are in, and what can be done to revitalize them.

**Figure 4: The Three "M's" of Indigenous Language Education**

**M**ethods deal with what teaching techniques will be used at what age levels and stages of language loss.
**M**aterials deal with what things will be available for teachers and learners to use, including audiotapes, videotapes, storybooks, dictionaries, grammars, textbooks, and computer software.
**M**otivation deals with increasing the prestige (including giving recognition and awards to individuals and groups who make special efforts) and usefulness of the indigenous language in the community and using teaching methods that learners enjoy so they will come back for more indigenous language instruction.

I do not argue for keeping indigenous languages alive just for the sake of not seeing them disappear, for antiquarian reasons. Rather, I see these languages as conduits for indigenous cultures that have real value in our modern world. Students who are not being passed down their languages and cultures are often not successfully assimilating into the more positive aspects of mainstream culture. Instead, caught between two cultures without a thorough cultural foundation laid in the home, they often don't learn their tribal language or English very well and are prone to join gangs to seek the cultural identity and sense of belonging that is being denied them along with their ancestral language.

Richard Littlebear writes movingly in the first paper in this volume on how tribes already have all the signs, symbols, colors, and "turf" that today's youth are seeking when they join gangs. Gangs are an attempt by youth to gain a sense of belonging that has been denied them in a world of cultural homogenization, large impersonal schools, and mass marketing. In addition, these culturally lost children who join gangs in their search for identity are more susceptible to the allure of drugs and alcohol and learn the more negative aspects of the mainstream culture through movies, television, and popular music. In my view, indigenous language revitalization is part of a movement for spiritual renewal and healing that is badly needed both among many indigenous communities and in the world as a whole.

This revitalization of indigenous languages will not come easily. There has been a lack of sharing of information between communities about which indigenous language activities, strategies, and policies have proven effective and those that have not proven fruitful. Languages need special love, care, and protection by the communities that want to keep them alive. If indigenous languages are to

survive, it is not enough for more children and adults to learn these languages. Environments also must be created in indigenous communities where the indigenous language is used exclusively. The old saying "use it or lose it" goes for indigenous languages as well as a lot of other things. These exclusive environments could be community centers such as the Maori Culture Centers; they can be individual homes; and they can even be Christian churches.

All five of the Stabilizing Indigenous Languages symposiums have highlighted the need for community support of school-based efforts at indigenous language revitalization and the fact that it is critically important for parents to speak their indigenous language in the presence of their young children. While anyone can take up the cause of indigenous language revitalization by learning and speaking an indigenous language, programs of language revitalization at the community or wider levels have an increased chance for success if they are carefully researched in the manner described by Greymorning, Rubin, Anonby, and others in this volume. The Stabilizing Indigenous Language symposiums and the Teaching Indigenous Languages (TIL) website at http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/TIL.html are playing a part in a worldwide effort to disseminate information about ways to keep indigenous languages alive and well, so that anyone wanting to set up a language revitalization program can easily access the trials, tribulations, and successes of others who share their concerns for one or all of the indigenous languages of the world. Written versions of presentations from the five symposiums mentioned in this introduction can be found either at the TIL website or in the three published volumes of symposium proceedings.

**Note**: Portions of this paper were presented on July 17, 1996 in Albuquerque, New Mexico, at the World Indigenous Peoples Conference: Education and on May 16, 1998 at the Fifth Annual Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Symposium in Louisville, Kentucky.

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